

We also want to replace what some call a culture of silence with a culture of safety; an environment that encourages others to talk about errors, what caused them, and how to stop them in the first place. So we'll support legislation that protects provider and patient confidentiality, but that does not undermine individual rights to remedies when they have, in fact, been harmed. People should have access to information about a preventable medical error that causes serious injury or death of a family member, and providers should have protections to encourage reporting and prevent mistakes from happening again.

And when it comes to reporting, we want the Federal Government to continue to lead by example. The Department of Veterans Affairs already has a mandatory reporting system for death and serious injuries. Beginning this spring, all 500 Department of Defense hospitals and clinics will do the same. And the VA will add a voluntary reporting system in its hospitals nationwide.

Finally, I'm announcing a number of new steps we will take that specifically target medication errors. Each year, medication mix-ups claim thousands of lives. Sometimes mistakes occur because many different drugs sound or look the same, sometimes because people are taking multiple medications and going to multiple doctors.

I'm calling on the Food and Drug Administration to develop new standards to help prevent medical errors caused by drugs that sound similar or packaging that looks similar. In addition, we'll develop new label standards that highlight common drug interactions and dosage errors. The VA will also put in place computerized systems to prevent medication mistakes. No more handwritten prescriptions that no one can read.

Hospitals that have already taken these steps have eliminated—listen to this—two out of three medication errors. This is very significant. We tend to think all of our problems are the result of some complex, high-tech glitch. We just want to make sure people can read the prescriptions—two out of three of these errors can be eliminated.

Taken together, these actions represent the most significant effort our Nation has ever made to reduce medical errors. It's a

balanced, commonsense approach based on prevention, not punishment; on problem-solving, not blame-placing.

If we can do this and pass a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights, we will have gone a long way toward ensuring quality health care for all Americans in the 21st century. Just think about it. We can cut preventable medical errors in half in 5 years, reduce concerns about lawsuits and about medical mistakes, avoid needless injuries and deaths, save lives, and make the world's best health care system much better for all Americans.

This is a worthy endeavor. It is one that, as you see, will be bipartisan, and one that I am committed to seeing through. Thank you all for being here, and let's get about the business of doing this.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:53 p.m. in Presidential Hall in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Barbara A. Blakeney, first vice president, American Nurses Association, who introduced the President; John M. Eisenberg, Administrator, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality; and Paul A. London, Senior Policy Adviser to the Secretary, Department of Commerce.

### **Proclamation 7275—Registration Under the Military Selective Service Act**

*February 22, 2000*

*By the President of the United States of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

Section 3 of the Military Selective Service Act, as amended (50 U.S.C. App. 453), provides that male citizens of the United States and other male persons residing in the United States who are between the ages of 18 and 26, except those exempted by sections 3 and 6(a) of the Military Selective Service Act, must present themselves for registration at such time or times and place or places, and in such manner as determined by the President. Section 6(k) provides that such exceptions shall not continue after the cause for the exemption ceases to exist.

**Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton,** President of the United States of America,

by the authority vested in me by the Military Selective Service Act, as amended (50 U.S.C. App. 451 *et seq.*), do hereby proclaim as follows:

**Section 1.** Paragraph 1–201 of Proclamation 4771 of July 2, 1980, is amended to read:

“1–2. *Places and Times for Registration.*

1–201. Persons who are required to be registered and who are in the United States shall register at the places and by the means designated by the Director of Selective Service. These places and means may include but are not limited to any classified United States Post Office, the Selective Service Internet web site, telephonic registration, registration on approved Government forms, registration through high school and college registrars, and the Selective Service reminder mailback card.”

**Sec. 2.** Paragraph 1–202 of Proclamation 4771 of July 2, 1980, is amended to read:

“1–202. Citizens of the United States who are required to be registered and who are not in the United States, shall register via any of the places and methods authorized by the Director of Selective Service pursuant to paragraph 1–201 or present themselves at a United States Embassy or Consulate for registration before a diplomatic or consular officer of the United States or before a registrar duly appointed by a diplomatic or consular officer of the United States.”

**In Witness Whereof**, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-second day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

**William J. Clinton**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., February 23, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on February 21.

### **Remarks at a Reception Honoring Lieutenant Governor Ruth Ann Minner of Delaware**

*February 22, 2000*

**The President.** Thank you very much, Lieutenant Governor Minner, Senator Biden, ladies and gentlemen. I was sitting

here looking at all of your faces, and I reached over and whispered to Joe Biden, I said, “You know, I really like Delaware.” [Laughter] It has certain unique parallels to my home State. It’s two of the places in America where there are more chickens than people. [Laughter] And depending on what day it is, that’s not all bad. [Laughter]

I am profoundly grateful to Delaware for many reasons. You have been so good to me and to Al Gore. Twice you have given me your electoral vote; you supported the Vice President, for which I am very grateful. I couldn’t even begin to tell you, in the time I have allotted tonight, all the reasons for my gratitude, respect, and affection for Senator Biden.

**Senator Joseph R. Biden, Jr.** Go ahead and tell them. [Laughter]

**The President.** Beginning with his uncommon humility. [Laughter] His retiring personality. [Laughter] His always muted voice. [Laughter] Actually, if you’re looking for somebody in American politics who understands what life is like for ordinary people, who’s always there to defend the Constitution of the United States and understands the rest of the world—in other words, the three big things you’ve got to do if you’re a Senator—there is nobody in the Senate who can do all three as well as Joe Biden. You are very well-served.

And the third thing I’d like to say is, I’m also grateful to your Governor for a lifetime, nearly, it seems like, a political lifetime of friendship and all the work we’ve done together on welfare reform, on strengthening families, on child support enforcement. I’m elated that he’s running for the Senate. And I look forward to his success and to his service.

The fourth reason I’m here is, this is my year to support women for elected office. I’m into that. I think we ought to do more of that. [Laughter] Hillary tried to call me right before I got here. She’s up in New York and coming home tonight. And I would imagine she was trying to call me before I got here to say that she thinks you guys ought to stick together—[laughter]—and so do I.

But let me tell you, finally, I’m here because I really admire Ruth Ann Minner. I really admire Ruth Ann Minner. Some of you